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MEMORANDUM

1573 ²

DATE: September 4, 1962

TO: The Vice President

FROM: Colonel Burris

RE: Shipments to Cuba

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NSC 66.56/177 State 66.2/3/77
By smg, NARS, Date 6/20/77

During 1961 the average number of Soviet ships docking in Cuban ports was 20-25. During the first eight months of 1962 the figure rose to approximately 30 a month. During August, 60 Soviet ships unloaded personnel, vehicles, construction equipment, fuel trucks, helicopters, radar vans, and heavy crated equipment, at various Cuban ports. In addition, an average of 10-15 tankers per month provide oil for the Cuban economy. With the utilization of the excessive number of Soviet ships in August, the Soviets have found it necessary to charter western ships flying the flags principally of Great Britain, Greece and Italy to transport foodstuffs, grains, goods and vehicles to Cuba.

Without regard to the current military effort in Cuba, that country's trade with the Soviet Union continues to rise. It now has the largest non-bloc trade of the Soviet Union. With an increase of approximately 15 percent over last year, Cuban annual trade with the Soviet Union is approximately \$1 billion.

Soviet personnel recently arrived in Cuba are agricultural and industrial advisers, technicians and military specialists. Only a few tourists appear to be involved. The military specialists are to be utilized for the training of Cuban personnel on Soviet-provided equipment. In accordance with usual Soviet practice, the military advisers and technicians will avoid activities, particularly armed conflict, which could elicit the charge that Soviet troops were acting in an aggressive capacity. They would not become involved, for example, to the extent which U.S. forces are operating in South Vietnam.

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